

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

GRAND HOTEL VILLA SERBELLONI
LAKE COMO, ITALY

If you're in the mood for a stay at a grand hotel—and a glimpse into 19th century luxury of the kinds these days mostly found only in Merchant and Ivory movies—visit **Villa Serbelloni**, a 5-star hotel on Lake Como in Italy.

A hotel since 1873, Villa Serbelloni extends along 2 wings spreading from an original central villa, where the central salon, an enormous room with an amazing ceiling, offers guests appealing clusters of



The pool looks out on Lake Como

overstuffed chairs and a giant fireplace. Doors open onto a terrace that provides lovely views of Lake Como. Old drawings of local costumes and landscapes frame the walls of grand marble staircase cushioned by red carpets. For guests overwhelmed by these evocations of a by-gone standard of luxury, there's a small, even intimate, bar to relax in.

Prior to the Russian Revolution, the hotel was a regular destination for the Russian Imperial family. Like many European establishments, it has been marked

in various ways by the tumultuous and violent events of the 20th century. During the Second World War, the hotel briefly shed its patrician ways to shelter villagers who'd lost their homes to bombs.

The hotel has been owned by the Bucher family, one of the most famous names in hospitality, since 1918. Family members live on the premises, and hold to the philosophy of “offering personalized service,” as front-office manager Antonio Calzolaro explained to visiting **Cognoscenti Magazine** editors in an exclusive interview. “We're here to provide a relaxing holiday. This is not just a place where you are a number.”

The hotel's 83 rooms offer all the amenities; ours had sweeping views of sun-drenched Lake Como. There is also an extensive health and beauty center offering massages, seaweed wraps and other forms of pampering—as well as two restaurants, an indoor and an outdoor swimming pool, and a fitness center. Villa Serbelloni has its own pier and can organize boat excursions on the lake.

This article was written by Nicole Medvecky and other contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*. Photo courtesy of *Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni*.

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